

**Bio for David W. James, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent, Akron Public Schools**

*Revised August 2020*

Akron Public Schools Superintendent David W. James, Ed.D. is the 22<sup>nd</sup> chief executive of the Akron school system. He oversees roughly 21,000 pupils, 3,000 employees and operations of more than 40 school buildings.

For the past 12 years since August 2008 Akron Public Schools has been under the leadership of Superintendent David W. James, Ed.D. His stewardship and leadership of one of Ohio's largest urban districts have been exemplary.

For much of 2020, Dr. James has guided the schools through the challenges of COVID-19 preparing students, families and staff at APS with safety as a priority and learning as the ongoing mission. Dr. James' team created both a 100% remote learning model for students for fall of 2020 and a hybrid plan that if utilized would mix online and in-class learning for the district's 21,000 students.

Under his leadership, the nutritional staff at Akron Public Schools prepared and distributed hundreds of thousands of meals for the children of Akron all spring and summer and into fall for APS students. Staff and volunteers continue to distribute 'grab and go' meals outside three dozen Akron Public Schools buildings.

Most APS schools are brand new now. Dr. James has led the largest building renovation and consolidation project in the history of the Akron schools. Converting nearly all 47 Akron school buildings into modern, safe community learning centers (CLC) schools by day, community centers (CLC) for residents during evenings and weekends. The final CLC to be constructed is set to open in the fall of 2022 and serve the Kenmore/Garfield communities.

David, his staff and key community partners have successfully worked with Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL) to have Akron Public Schools designated as a Ford Next Generation Learning Community. A division of Ford Motor Company, Ford NGL is nationally recognized for its unique approach to learning that better prepares high school students for career success.

Through this framework, the district is transitioning all high schools, and eventually all schools, into the College & Career Academies of Akron (CCAA). Through this revolutionary approach to high school, APS is now offering in every high school a smaller, more focused learning environment—and students are selecting a college and career path similar to selecting a major in college.

All APS freshmen are enrolled in Freshman Academy where students focus on college and career exploration to make an informed decision about selecting an academy for their sophomore through senior years. Roughly 250 business and community partners have agreed to join with individual academies and pathways at the high schools. Under the academy framework, schools can offer a more focused learning setting—and students can select a college and career path similar to picking a major in college.

Also groundbreaking is the dual/degree program David James has made available to students. This gives them a leg up on college by taking both high school and college courses and receiving

both a diploma *and* a two/year college degree upon graduation from high school. This program is offered as part of the curriculum now throughout APS, at our Akron Early College High School on the campus of The University of Akron and through a partnership with Stark State College.

Leadership from David James has led to a partnership with the LeBron James Family Foundation (LJFF) to create the I PROMISE School, which opened in July 2018. Each year, Akron Public Schools identifies a new class of students that, by third grade, have already fallen behind their peers. With research showing this is a critical time to intervene, LJFF provides what are called wraparound supports, or as LeBron says, “We wrap our arms around these kids and support them with the resources, mentorship and encouragement they need to stay on track to graduation.”

David James earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics and his master’s degree from Cleveland State University in public administration and his Doctor of Education from University of Phoenix in March of 2019.

David is the 2019 Sam Miller Goodness Award recipient. The honor was presented by Values in Action in Cleveland. Dr. James is the recipient of the 2017 Ohio Superintendent Outstanding Performance Award from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and -- also in that year -- honoree of the Glass Half Full Award from GAR Foundation. The Glass Half Full Award commends leaders for their inspiring and optimistic guidance of nonprofit organizations.

Dr. James was president (2017-18) of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, he received the Community Service Award from Project GRAD in 2017 and an Honorary Alumni Award from The University of Akron in 2013, is a 2008 Leadership Akron graduate and is the 2007 recipient of the Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award in Education.

Those who talk to David James will often hear him say, “Education is everyone’s responsibility. Build the future. Take part.” He spreads this message to the many boards on which he serves.

*Learn more at: [www.akronschools.com](http://www.akronschools.com)*